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SUBJECT Changes in the Organization and Strength of the
23rd Tank Regiment

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

In April 1951, the 3d Tank Battalion of the 23d Tank Regiment received an unknown number of JS 3 Tanks in addition to the ten the battalion already held. Up to 20 May 51 there were no other changes [redacted]

Up to [redacted] May 1951, the 23d Tank Regiment had not received any recruits of the 1931 class, neither had any troops of the 1927 class been demobilized. However, this rotation was expected to take place very shortly.

Sufficient 1931 class recruits were to be sent to [] bringing the strength up to 930 and in addition fill out the third Tank Battalion to full strength.

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It is only when a school child leaves school, faces the facts of life, and has to stand on his own feet that he begins to question the official image of Soviet life in which he believed. For example, the Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of labor and yet the youngster of 15 finds that a neighbor was sentenced to two years of collective labor for being 15 minutes late to work.

older brothers or friends disillusion Soviet youth

Part of the disillusioning process started when [redacted] had to stand in line for bread for hours. [redacted] heard the complaints of people in the food and other queues.

[redacted] doubts in the minds of the elite

For example, an engineer knows the differences, but the engineer is not one of the privileged classes. There is an "assured class", security troops, all officers, KVD etc, and a "privileged class."

Most of them are opportunists and "bait change their tunes entirely if the regime were to collapse.

There are a few fanatics. All are opportunists. No one can do it without a minimum amount of life care on the same economic level. Therefore, any class relationship must be prevented.

If ideas of Communism could be put in practice, that would be fine. So far as the people are concerned, the system is material--material considerations are primary. The people consider the government, and in the final analysis, Stalin, responsible.

The government is the party--people consider both the same, as in practice they are inseparable.

No one, neither peasants, workers nor the elite, talks politics. People noted what happened to Zhukov and Shukov. Stalin is extremely sensitive on this subject.

If two people are together--very close friends, who trust each other--they may open up. But if there is the slightest suspicion, then their talk is in very general terms.

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No man is indispensable and the death of Stalin will not cause much change. Zhukov would like to remain the regime and there are others like him in the Army who would also like to do so.

The people are unable to learn currently about US policy or about "what Americans are" because radio programs inevitably reach only a small, upper class segment of the population. The only way to reach a large audience would be through written material. The people want to have some current information regarding American and US policy as they have learned a great deal about the outside world, and to some extent about Americans, from the reports of the troops who have been in Central and Eastern Europe and, to some extent, from lower echelons of delegation sent to western countries.

All people who read the Soviet newspapers or hear the Soviet radio know that the regime lies to them. The people tend to believe the exact opposite of that which is set out as fact by the regime. In respect to internal matters the people perceive through their daily experience that the regime lies. This tends to make them reject what the regime says currently about external matters, even though this cannot be checked personally. The reports of those who have been outside reinforce this tendency to disbelieve the regime's propaganda about external affairs, with little or no current contacts with the outside world, the people would tend toward some measure of acceptance of this propaganda.

The segment of population most likely to be vulnerable to the regime's propaganda is the young people in school, in industrial training programs and to some extent in the military forces. This group is less exposed to the realities of life in the Soviet Union. Those who work and have to assume responsibility have to recognize the falsity of regime propaganda. However, to some extent, even this young group becomes skeptical as a result of indoctrination from older people, who still have great influence, and of casual observations. A very interesting paradox is that the schools extol the noble sentiments of the Soviet Constitution, despite the blatant disregard of the Constitution by the regime.

All classes in the Soviet Union recognize the general falsity of the regime's claims, and many of the elements of Soviet weakness--because of some form of personal experience. For example, troops riding in both American and Soviet type trucks recognize that Soviet trucks are inferior. Again the peasant recognizes that agriculture is not practiced as described in the press. This recognition of the truth was described as "cynicism" by administrative circles.

Most or all social and economic classes are hostile to the regime except for the "assured" and "privileged" class. [redacted] do not think that this upper class has any significant degree of good qualities. A minority are fanatical--ardent, apparently immune to reason. The majority are opportunists who accept any given official line but who would be ready to desert the regime if their own interests so dictated. [redacted] a strong resentment against this social class, but do not [redacted] fairly that the opportunists might desert the regime early enough to do some damage in helping about its collapse.

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